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What Do The People of AFRICA Want?

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COUNCIL ON AFRICAN AFFAIRS

What Do the People of Africa Want?

By MRS. PAUL ROBESON

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"We are determined that we shall gain total victory over our enemies, and we recognize the fact that our enemies are not only Germany, Italy and Japan: they are all the forces of oppression, intolerance, insecurity and injustice which have impeded the forward march of civilization."

—PRESIDENT FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT on the second anniversary of the signing of the Atlantic Charter, August 16, 1943.

FOREWORD

IN SHARP and clear focus, Mrs. Paul Robeson has presented here a simple and dramatic picture of the people of Africa. These people—and all the rest of the world—stand now on the threshold of a new day. But we cannot truly enter into that new day unless we rid ourselves once and for all of the ignorance and misconceptions which one group of people have regarding another group of people. The justification of slavery and imperialism has perhaps given rise to more prejudiced and distorted portrayal of the African than of any other people. Now is the time to get the facts straight.

Such knowledge is urgently needed today because Africa looms as a major testing-ground of the policies of international cooperation represented by the Bretton Woods agreement and by the International Security Organization being shaped at San Francisco as this is written. Not only the future of the people of that continent, but America's future and the world's future depend upon substituting in place of the old imperialist rivalries and exploitation a new United Nations program directed toward making the Africans equal partners in a world-wide system of prosperity and democracy. The support and furtherance of that United Nations program is the responsibility of democratic-minded peoples of every country. And such support, to be effective, must be based upon an intelligent knowledge of the people whom we aspire to aid—their past history, their present condition, their capabilities and aspirations.

The author of this pamphlet, besides being the wife of a renowned champion of all oppressed peoples, is highly qualified by study and travel to present the true picture of the African people. Since 1928 she has spent most of her time travelling and studying abroad. In 1936 she made an extended tour through Africa in connection with her graduate studies in anthropology at the University of London and the London School of Economics. To the six years of such study abroad Mrs. Robeson has added still more

at the Hartford Seminary Foundation in this country, where she is currently preparing for the doctorate degree in anthropology.

Her first book, *Paul Robeson, Negro,* published in 1930, created a sensation. The knowledge and observation gained since then has gone into her second book, *African Journey,* published in June, 1945, by John Day and Co. Mrs. Robeson is widely known as a lecturer on Africa and on race relations problems.

In keeping with its program of providing accurate information about Africa and its people and of promoting policies for African advancement and world security, the Council on African Affairs is particularly pleased to have the opportunity of presenting "What Do the People of Africa Want?" to readers in this country and abroad.

MAX YERGAN,
Executive Director,
Council on African Affairs.

New York
May 15, 1945

What Do the People of Africa Want?

Why should we bother about Africa and the African people?
Africa is the Dark Continent—remote.
Africans are said to be just a lot of black savages—and don't count.

Most of us felt that way about China a few years ago. *If* we felt anything at all, or knew anything at all, about China. Why bother about China and the Chinese? China is in Asia—remote. The Chinese people are just a lot of yellow coolies—and don't count. (Three and a half million square miles, and four hundred and fifty million people, don't count!)

Most of us felt that way about Russia a few years ago. *If* we felt anything at all, or knew anything at all, about Russia. Why bother about Russia and the Russians? The Soviet Union is on the outskirts of Europe and in Asia—remote. And the Soviet people are just a lot of red Bolsheviks—and don't count. (Nearly nine million square miles, and nearly two hundred million people—don't count!)

Now, of course, many of us know better. Today we read dispatches from Chungking and from Moscow as casually as we read dispatches from London and Paris.

Today China and the Chinese people are so important to us, to the Allied Nations, that we cannot afford to allow them to have

serious internal strife. China and the Chinese people are so important to the shape of the world, that Civil War in China endangers us all. The Allies cannot afford to allow China the luxury of internal warfare. If we are to win a war for democracy, the people of China must have democracy too, whether the people in power in China want democracy for them or not.

Today the Soviet Union and the Soviet people are so important to us, to the Allied Nations, that we are straining every effort to establish good relations with them. (Sometimes we don't strain so successfully, but at least we realize the necessity for those good relations—military, economic and diplomatic.) Most of us know that the Soviet Union has successfully shouldered a major part of this war, and that with the help of the courage, endurance, and efficiency of the Red Army, and the Soviet people behind that army, we gained victory in Europe.

So today most of us are not so ignorant about China and about the Soviet Union as we were yesterday. But we are still very ignorant about AFRICA.

President Roosevelt revieuing American Negro troops in Liberia, 1943. Seated behind Roosevelt is ex-President Barclay of the Negro Republic.

Knowledge of Africa Today Important

This so-called Dark Continent is nearly twelve million square miles in area, and these so-called black savages are more than 150 million in number. On the map, the United States could be put on Africa three times, and there would still be enough space left over for all the countries of Europe except Russia.

Can we today, intelligent people, living in a realistic world, afford to ignore or be ignorant about Africa? Such a question is academic now. Circumstances are taking charge of us.

Just as we resisted consciousness of the Soviet Union and China, just so are we resisting consciousness of Africa. And just as the circumstances arising out of this tremendous emergency of the war, and the peace to come, have forced us, however reluctantly, to inform ourselves and be concerned about the Soviet Union and the Soviet people, about China and the Chinese people—just so these same circumstances, arising out of this same emergency, will force us—maybe even more reluctantly, but nevertheless *will force us*—to inform and concern ourselves about Africa and the African people.

Whether we like it or not, Africa is rapidly looming up on the horizon of world thinking. The North African campaign was crucial in this war. That's where we got our start on the march to victory over Germany. Some of our supply bases, repair bases, air fields are in Africa. Dakar, Cairo, Brazzaville are stations almost as well known on the world air routes as Newark, Buffalo and Dallas on American air routes. Formerly remote Africa is right around the corner—by plane. It is high time, therefore, that we began to learn something about this vast continent and its millions of people.

I refer particularly to *Black Africa,* which is certainly the major part of Africa, the most important part—in area, population, and actual and potential wealth. Yet North Africa is better known to us, being virtually a part of Mediterranean Europe. Black Africa lies south of the Sahara. This is Africa proper.

Africa's Ancient Civilization

Black Africa has a history reaching back to the very dawn of human consciousness. Black empires existed for centuries in the Sudan, Central Africa; well established empires with regular succession of rulers, graded organization of court officials and provincial governors, and all the ceremonial incidental to such a political structure. There were temples, towns, records; there were flourishing markets attended by thousands of people.

The Hausa Police maintained order at their markets. Sociologists point out that a police force, paid out of public monies, is a very late development in the history of European cities. When Africans had their police, it was still the custom for wealthy people in England and on the Continent to take their retainers and servants with them for protection against robbers when going out after dark.

The *law-abiding* nature of the African has often been commented upon by travellers and explorers. African tribes love to settle

Paramount Chief of the Ashanti people, Gold Coast.

their disputes in their courts by discussion, called *palaver*. Every tribe has a clearly developed code of law. There are imposing volumes on Ashanti Law and Custom, and on Hausa Law, in most good university libraries. The Ashanti and the Hausa are only two of the many tribes on the West Coast of Africa.

Most people think of the Africans' so-called witch-doctors and medicine-men as primitive, ignorant men, playing upon the superstition of their people. Reliable investigators—white investigators, mind you—point out that these medicine-men do not generally resort to magic and spirits, but have a considerable knowledge of materia medica, and often treat diseases on purely scientific principles: that is, they examine the patient, diagnose the ailment, and prescribe specific medicine and diet.

Africa's Contribution to World Culture

In very early times, Africans were smelting iron. Dr. Franz Boas, the dean of American anthropologists, says: "It seems likely that at a time when the European was still satisfied with crude stone tools, the Africans had invented the art of smelting iron. Neither Ancient Europe, nor Ancient Western Asia, nor Ancient China knew iron, and everything points to its introduction from Africa."

The Ashanti people knew how to make cotton fabrics, turn and glaze earthenware, forge iron instruments and arms, embroider rugs and carpets, set gold and precious stones.

The fashioning of musical instruments is one of the industries to be found throughout the length and breadth of Africa. It is quite possible that the African invented the harp, violin and piano.

The Bahima, a tribe in Uganda, Central Africa, weave baskets so fine that they can contain milk without leakage. Boas points to the products of African craftsmen—the blacksmith, weaver, wood carver—as furnishing cultural achievements of no mean order.

Great modern artists have said that the whole school of modern art known as abstract representation derived its inspiration from

African handiwork—from wood carvings of ceremonial masks and figures, and the famous bronze castings in Benin, West Africa. Some of these brilliant African works of art make stunning exhibits in some of the finest museums in the world today.

And what was the nature of the life of these so-called primitive people? It is worth noting that in traditional African society, land has always been held in common, and used for the benefit of all the population. A man could not retain his land unless he *used* it, that is, unless he actually lived on it or cultivated it. The simplest village life of the African tribe has developed forms of common action which might well be copied by more civilized and complex societies. The politeness and the ceremonial considerateness of the African people have received exceptional tribute from many early explorers.

African languages are rich and expressive, and almost all tribes have many proverbs and tales and riddles which embody their experience of life, folk humor and wisdom. Every tribe has a well established code of morals, scrupulously adhered to and enforced. One investigator writes: "The Negro Tribe that has no moral conceptions is yet to be discovered and described."

Africa and Today's World

Now all this may be very interesting and wonderful, but it is really history, and perhaps material for museums, you say. What has modern Africa, Africa today, to do with world affairs? This, too, may surprise you. *Africa has a great deal to do with modern world affairs.* Did you know, for example, that—

- Four hundred million ounces of gold, about one-half of all the gold in the world, comes from Africa, which fact is important when you consider that gold is the world's principal basic standard of currency exchange.
- About one-half of the essential alloys used in making steel come from Africa.

• Many extremely important agricultural raw materials, including cotton, palm oil, cocoa, rubber, come from Africa.

• More than one-half of the precious radium, that boon to the health of the world, comes from Africa. Probably the largest deposit of very rich pitch-blend, from which radium is extracted, is in Congo.

But these are mere physical, economic aspects of Africa. Let us look at other very important aspects—the military and diplomatic aspects—and see how Africa stands up. Note this:

The Free French, looking for a base of operations in 1940 from which to fight back against Germany, found it in their colony in Equatorial Africa. There, with the help of one Felix Eboué, the

Governor Felix Eboué. He died May 17, 1944.

black Governor of the Chad Region, De Gaulle's followers found haven and support.

Because this black man in the very center of Black Africa, undaunted by France's defeat and Germany's vaunted invincibility—because this black man, with courage and foresight and initiative (at the strategic moment when these virtues were at a premium), decided to take his stand with the Allies, with democracy—because of this, Africa was secured to the Allies, and the successful African campaign was made possible. Eboué's decision to join the Free French at one stroke:

- prevented a joining of the Italian Libyan Army with the Italian Ethiopian Army,
- established a protective belt against enemy penetration into the Congo region and southern Africa,
- provided 15,000 crack colonial troops to threaten the Italian flank,
- provided a base from which the British could send badly needed planes and air-borne troops to the desperate Egyptian battle-front.

A true history of this war will recognize this man Eboué, now dead, as a great statesman of the world—one who was great at a time when statesmen of great nations were timid, uncertain, appeasing, capitulating.

But what about those other Africans, those 150 million we are accustomed to think of as ignorant savages?

Some Signs of a New Day in Africa

The witch-doctor's son is now the technician in the laboratory, using the microscope every day. The drummer's son is now the telegraph operator. The carriers, the porters who used to carry loads on their heads, are now tuning up airplanes. The former blacksmith is now the foreman in charge of smelting furnaces. The boy who rushed away from a railway engine a few years ago, terrified by the "belching monster," is now the engineer. The boys who used

An airplane mechanic in French Africa.

to count cattle with rows of sticks or pebbles, are now using modern computing machines in banks.

An African trader who used to know only simple barter, now holds the government contract for carrying mail in his fleet of trucks. This African has had a trucking business for some time in Sandoa, in Congo. When he was ready to buy a new five-ton truck (in Africa cars cost at least twice as much as they do here), he bought the truck with cash.

In Leopoldville, in Congo, the only big hotel, which used to be run by missionaries, is now run entirely by Africans. The African manager maintains his staff; plans and orders the meals; runs the modern dining room, the modern laundry; meets the guests. He speaks Portugese, French, English, Swedish, and of course, many African languages.

In post offices in West and Central Africa, African clerks make

PORTUGAL
SPAIN
MADRID
LISBON
SARDINIA
ROME
Naples
TURKEY
MEDITERRANEAN SEA
TUNIS
Sfax
Malta
ALGIERS
ALGERIA
MOROCCO
TRIPOLITANIA
LIBYA
CIRENAICA
Crete
Cyprus
Beirut
SYRIA
Damascus
Alexandria
CAIRO
Suez
TRANS
JORDAN
EGYPT
RED SEA
SAUDI
ARABIA
NEJD
MECCA
BAGHDAD
RIO DE ORO
MAURITANIA
SAHARA
FRENCH WEST AFRICA
FRENCH SUDAN
Timbuktu
NIGER TERRITORY
CHAD
ANGLO-
EGYPTIAN
SUDAN
Suakin
Massaua
ERITREA
YEMEN
Aden (Br)
FRENCH SOMALIL
BRITISH
SOMALI-
LAND
ETHIOPIA
ADDIS ABABA
GAMBIA
BAMAKO
FR GUINEA
Kankan
IVORY
COAST
ABIDJAN
MONROVIA
LIBERIA
GOLD COAST
NIGERIA
(British)
LAGOS
Grand Bassam
CAMEROON
YAUNDE
Fernando Po
Principe I
S Tome
C Lopez
Annobon
GABON
UBANGI
SHARI
FRENCH EQUATORIAL AFRICA
MIDDLE CONGO
BRAZZAVILLE
LEOPOLDVILLE
BELGIAN
CONGO
Stanleyville
UGANDA
KENYA
NAIROBI
ITALIAN SOMALILAND
MOGADISCIO
Malindi
Mombasa
ZANZIBAR
TANGANYIKA
TERRITORY
DAR ES SALAAM
Mikindani
Boma
Congo R
Loanda
ANGOLA
NOVA LISBOA
Benguela
Mossamedes
NORTHERN
RHODESIA
NYASALAND
ZOMBA
Salisbury
SOUTHERN
RHODESIA
MOZAMBIQUE
Mozambique
Comoros
Mayotte
MADAGASCAR
Ascension I
St Helena
C Frio
Walvis B
(Walfisch B)
SOUTH-
WEST
AFRICA
WINDHOEK
Luderitz
BECHUANALAND
PRETORIA
Johannesburg
SWAZILAND
Delagoa Bay
LOURENÇO MARQUES
BASUTOLAND
Durban (P Natal)
UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA
P Nolloth
Capetown
C. of Good Hope
Mossel Bay
Port Elizabeth
E London
SOUTH
ATLANTIC

out international money orders, register mail for overseas, and receive mail from all parts of the world.

There are representatives from thirty different tribes in a Sunday School in Elizabethville, in Congo, working together in friendship and peace, under a brilliant African Sunday School superintendent.

European Rulers and African Subjects

Now, I don't want to give you a misleading picture of Africa. *There is frightful, ruthless exploitation, segregation, discrimination, oppression.* The examples I have given are the *exceptions, to show what the African can do, has done, against terrific odds.* Now, let's take a look at some of the odds which hold him back.

To start at the beginning of this very complex situation, may I go back for a moment to some figures I gave you a little while ago. I said that Africa is nearly twelve million square miles in area, with a population of more than 150 million.

The way I arrived at these figures is interesting and revealing. I went to the almanac and to all kinds of reference books, but nowhere could I find any straightforward figures on Africa. Africa simply does not exist as a whole, as an entity. Africa exists as British Africa, French Africa, Belgian, Portugese, Italian and Spanish Africa. And so I had to collect the data on all these different sections of Africa to arrive at my totals.

In all that vast continent, in all those twelve million square miles, and with all those 150 million people, only a pitifully small part—one-fifteenth of the area and less than one-fifth of the people—are even vaguely presumed to have any pretence whatever of controlling their own land and destiny. And when I tell you that this one-fifteenth area and this one-fifth people comprise Liberia, Ethiopia, and Egypt, you will realize that we had better not classify even them as wholly independent. So we may say that Africa does not belong to the Africans, but to people who are not African in any sense whatever.

Let us look, very briefly, at how some of the Africans fare (con-

ditions, of course, vary) at the hands of their non-African trustees.

In some parts of Africa, in Kenya, for instance, the European occupiers of land hold an average of over 2,500 acres each, while the Africans crowded into Native Reserves hold an average of only eight acres of land each, much of which is too poor even for grazing.

The three and a half million Africans in Kenya (there are 20,000 Europeans) had no direct representation whatever in the Legislative Council up until last year, when one African was nominated by the governor. They have no independent newspaper. Only three per cent receive schooling, and there is *one* hospital bed for every 1650 Africans.

Wages of African workers are as low as $1.60 to $2.00 *per month*, though the European planters enjoy guaranteed markets and high

South African mine worker.

prices for their crops. Africans conscripted for labor and refusing to work or deserting their jobs before the *conscription period* of two to four months is up are imprisoned. This, of course, is *forced labor.*

How South Africa Keeps the African "in His Place"

In South Africa there is a comparatively large European population and many large cities and towns. The two million Europeans *do not even permit* the eight million Africans to live in the cities and towns. The majority of the African people are confined by law to *Native Reserves* (you know, like our American Indian Reserves here). These Reserves are mostly barren areas far removed from the towns and cities, and all are undeveloped and without any improvements whatsoever.

However, the South African white folks need the Africans to work for them, of course, and the Reserves are much too far from the place of work. So for convenience and practicality, the Africans who work for Europeans are permitted to live in what are called *locations,* which are areas well outside the town or city limits—say, from 5 to 10 miles outside. Africans who work in the mines are permitted to live in the Mining Compounds, and Africans in domestic service are permitted to live on the premises of their masters.

When I say the African is *permitted* to live, I say *permitted* advisedly. Because the African in South Africa must have a *permit,* called a *pass,* to leave the Reserve for any reason whatever. He must have a *permit* to live in a Location. He must have a *permit* or *pass* to show at all times and under any circumstances, if he is travelling on the roads or is anywhere outside the Reserves.

And if he does get that *permit,* that *pass,* so he can go outside the Reserves to work—what then? He can get a job as herd-boy, to look after a thousand or more sheep, for from $1.50 to $3.50 *per month.* He can go into domestic service for from $1.00 to $3.00 *per month.* Or he can go to work in the mines, at arduous, even dangerous work, for $14.00 per month (as against the $156.00 per

month of the European worker, doing much easier and less dangerous work).

And with these magnificent wages, what can the African worker do? He must pay Poll Tax, Hut Tax, Dog Tax, and so on. He must pay these taxes, although he has no direct representation whatsoever in the government and receives few if any benfits. As for the cost of living, he must also pay $5.50 for a bag of mealies (corn to you) for his family to eat, while the European pays $1.25 to the same trader for the same bag of mealies for *his cattle*.

I could go on like this indefinitely, but I don't want to bore you with the bitter facts.

The African People March Forward

In case there may be some wishful thinkers who feel that maybe, after all, the African is just a dumb animal, is content with his lot, doesn't know any better, doesn't want anything more—I'd like to mention *a few of the things the African himself has done about his situation*. (You know, it is sometimes said, and actually sometimes believed, that Negroes in America were happy under slavery: that they really loved and wanted to belong to their masters, who in turn loved them and understood them! This in spite of innumerable slave revolts and the historic Underground Railway!)

In considering what the African has done, we must always keep

Young Africans of today parading at Accra, Gold Coast.

in mind that in his homeland he has practically no voice which can be heard anywhere. Africans who have raised their voices against intolerable conditions are in prison for *sedition*. Nevertheless, Africans are in England, in America, in France, working for the progress of their people at home. African soldiers have *fought* on all the fronts in this war for the progress of their people at home.

Africans in Africa have built schools for themselves, and with the willing but limited help of missionaries, and the eventual, reluctant help of government, have enlarged and improved those schools. Africans in Africa are publishing their own newspapers.

The African people have organized themselves, in spite of the most severe repression, and are working actively, consistently, intelligently, effectively, for the improvement of conditions.

To cite just a few of their organizations, there are in British West Africa the West African Youth League, the National Council of Nigeria (a federation of about a hundred organizations), and scores of business, professional, and farmers' cooperative societies.

In South Africa one finds the African National Congress, established in 1920, the Non-European Unity Movement, the Southern Rhodesia Bantu Congress, the African Political Organization, and many other alert bodies.

Of particular importance is the recent rapid development of trade union organizations among the Africans in British territories. (Representatives from the four British West African colonies attended the recent World Labor Conference in London.) The union members range from skilled mechanics and white collar workers, such as teachers and civil service clerks, to unskilled laborers on the docks or in the mines. And the various unions in each territory are united in a Trade Union Congress.

African women, too, are organizing. South Africa has its National Council of Women. Nigeria has its Women's Party and Market Women's Association. In Liberia there is a Volunteer Women's Military Corps, directed by an American Negro woman graduate of New York University. Ethiopian women, under the patronage of

their Empress, have organized a Social Welfare and Health Service Program.

And very significant is the fact that progressive Africans in some sections of the continent now have the cooperation of some of the more enlightened Europeans, with this kind of result, as reported in the December, 1943, issue of *New Africa,* bulletin of the Council on African Affairs:

"Marking one of the most representative conferences ever held in South Africa, some 220 leaders of labor, religious and other organizations met together at Johannesburg in October and implemented the drafting of a 'Charter of Rights of the Native People of South Africa.'

"The Charter calls for government recognition of the Non-European trade unions, a minimum of £2 ($8.) per week for unskilled workers, abolition of all racial discrimination in industrial legislation, proportional representation of all tax-paying peoples and races in the legislatures, Constitutional provision for the eventual extension of the franchise to all adult persons, extension of the Unemployed Benefit Act to include all workers irrespective of race and color, and provision for adequate housing, medical, and educational services.

"The conference, presided over by the Very Rev. W. A. Palmer, Dean of Johannesburg, took steps to circulate the Charter throughout South Africa, and also called upon trade unions and other groups in the United States and Britain to support the program and 'help do away with the poverty and degradation in which Africans are forced to live.'"

A New French Policy for Africa

Another type of progress, on the level of government policy, is indicated in the following report on the Free French program for Africa, as presented in the March, 1944 issue of *New Africa*:

"In addressing the French Consultative Assembly prior to the Brazzaville Conference, René Pleven, Commissioner of the Colonies,

relegated to the dead past 'the old protectionist or slavery doctrines, according to which the sole function of Africa was to furnish materials to the industrial centers, which would sell it their manufactured goods.' He pointed out that France, through her own experience since 1940, had learned the error of 'this foolish subordination of one people to another.'

"The important economic and social advancement achieved in French Equatorial Africa through the progressive reforms undertaken by its Negro Governor General, Felix Eboué, may be said to have had no small influence in determining the new French colonial policies. Eboué had already demonstrated that these policies are practicable. The Free French Government has now said they are *necessary*."

The essence of the new French colonial prospectus is the abolition of the dependent status of the colonies.

African industrial development and the general raising of living standards are to be the new goals. In place of the old system of tariff barriers and preferential agreements whereby France monopolized the colonies' exports of raw materials and imports of manufactured goods, the new economic policy points toward colonial free trade and for furthering the process, developed during the war, of "lifting Africa out of its pre-war economic isolation."

Finally, the new policy limits gubernatorial powers, assures the development of Negro representative institutions, and projects a new constitutional relationship between post-war France and her overseas provinces—the term which now replaces "colonies."

African Troops Fight for Freedom

The whole world is thinking and talking about democracy, and millions of men all over the world are fighting and dying for it. Among those millions of fighting men are thousands of Africans. Africans aided in the liberation of France. French Colonial troops of the Second Armored Division under General LeClerc were the first to enter Paris when that city was liberated on August 25, 1944.

West African veterans home from Burma campaign disembarking from a hospital ship.

Other French African troops made up the main forces which successfully stormed Toulon, Marseilles, and other cities in Southern France.

Over 30,000 Africans from British Protectorates and colonies of lower Africa, plus several thousands of work-troops from the Union of South Africa (which does not accept African volunteers for active combat service) saw service with the British 5th and 8th Armies in Italy. Troops from French North Africa also played an important part in the Italian campaign.

British West and East African troops have seen several months of hard jungle fighting against the Japanese in Burma. They have won high praise and many citations in their successful assault against the enemy. Also on duty in this area is a large, mechanized Belgian Ambulance Unit, staffed mainly by Congolese, veterans of the African campaign.

What are these African soldiers fighting for?

What are all the millions of soldiers fighting for? They are fighting for democracy and the Four Freedoms—for themselves and for their people. Since the millions of soldiers are men of all na-

tions, colors, creeds, they are fighting for democracy and the Four Freedoms for *all* the peoples of the world.

Africa and the Peace

This thought, of what they are fighting for, very gravely concerns the fighting men. It sometimes fatally concerns them. It also very gravely concerns the governments of the world. They know that the military victory is only part of the winning of the war. The winning of the peace will complete and successfully conclude this war, and prevent possible future wars.

And the winning of the peace is very simple: Soldiers and their families WANT WHAT THEY ARE FIGHTING FOR. They want democracy and the Four Freedoms. AND UNTIL THEY HAVE IT—all these soldiers, and all their families, everywhere—THE WAR NOT ONLY WILL NOT BE WON—IT WILL NOT BE FINISHED.

And now, at last, I come to the key question: *What do the African people want?* The African people, human beings like other people, want what other people want. These 150 million people, this great majority of the people of Africa, want, quite reasonably, *at least* the labor, civil, and political rights equal to those enjoyed by the four million Europeans, the very, very small minority on their continent.

Specifically, they want decent food, decent housing and a decent education. They do not want these things *given to them*. They want, quite modestly, the right to work as others work and to be paid decently for their labor, so that they may, with dignity, provide these things for themselves.

And finally they want, along with the other peoples of the earth, the right of representation in, and responsibility for, their own government.

Until the African people, along with all the peoples of the earth, achieve these simple, reasonable, dignified, human minimum essentials, this war—which includes the peace—will not be won. It will not be finished.

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The Council on African Affairs exists for the purpose of disseminating accurate information concerning Africa and its people, and of directing public opinion toward furthering such policies and interests as are consistent with the needs and aspirations of Africans and with the requirements of international security.

The Council sponsors forums and public meetings, publishes a monthly bulletin and special pamphlets, and provides a press release service. The Council is a private, non-profit organization, financed entirely through voluntary contributions and subscriptions to its publications.

Other Publications of the Council

New Africa, monthly bulletin of news and opinion about Africa, $1.00 for a year.
Africa in the War, by Max Yergan. 5¢
For a New Africa, Proceedings of Conference on Africa, with addresses by Paul Robeson and Max Yergan. 10¢
The San Francisco Conference and the Colonial Issue, Memorandum prepared by the Council for the consideration of delegates at the United Nations Conference. (free)

The library of the Council is open to use by persons interested in the study of African problems. Bibliographies of recommended materials for use in reading programs on Africa are available. All requests for information are welcome.

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